

A
CANDID DEFENCE
OF
ADMINISTRATION,
AGAINST THE
ILL-FOUNDED CHARGES
OF
OPPOSITION.

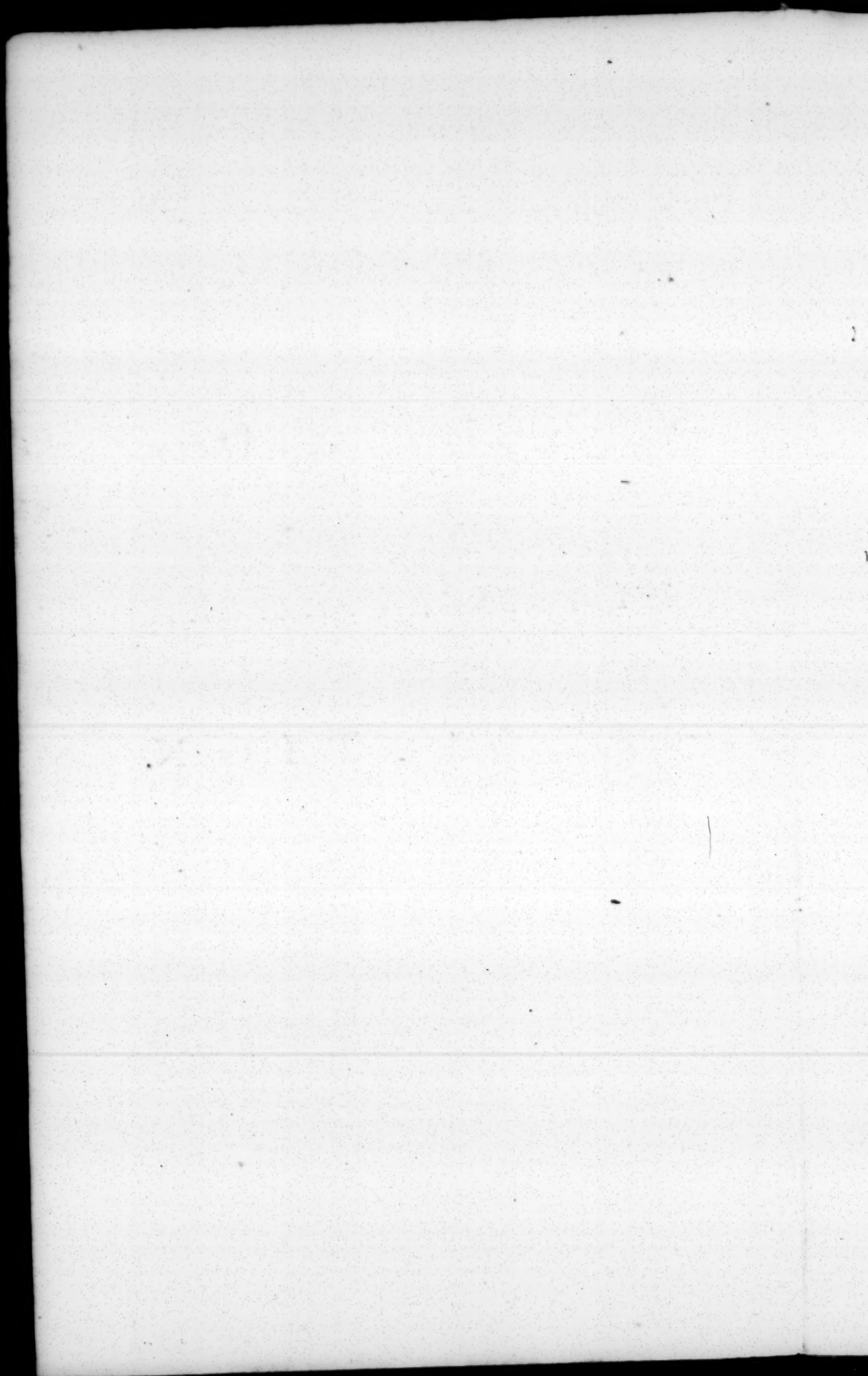
Nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in Malice.

SHAKESPEARE.

L O N D O N.

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MDCCLXXXI.



A
CANDID DEFENCE
OF
ADMINISTRATION.

THOUGH it is unquestionably no easy task, to conduct political disquisitions with candor, I yet profess to make the attempt, and to be directed in it by that principle alone. The difficulty of the undertaking by no means discourages me from pursuing it; but it will influence me, as it ought, to extraordinary care and caution in the prosecution of it; that I may give every objection to the measures of Ministry its due weight, and defend their proceedings no farther, than truth and justice will warrant.

Before the commencement of the troubles in America, the opposition to Govern-
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ment was neither violent nor formidable. The dispute with the Colonies seems to have been the principal source of the dissatisfaction, expressed by the adversaries of Administration. It will be proper therefore to trace that dispute to its origin, in order to see whether any, or what share of blame, should be charged on the present Ministers on that account; or how far they could have avoided, the line of conduct in that business, which they have pursued, since their appointment to office.

It is not necessary to inquire, what were the remote or secret considerations, which produced the American war; the Stamp Act was undoubtedly the public and ostensible cause. But this was the measure of Mr. Grenville, and therefore, if the Colonies were at first put out of temper by him, it is unjust to throw the blame on others. The majority of the people here approved the step, thought it reasonable in itself, and wished its establishment, imagining, that as more money would be brought into the treasury

treasury in consequence, their burdens might in some respects be diminished; they were persuaded besides, that by proper exertions, the act might have been enforced, and that in a short time, the objections of the Americans to it would have been removed, and their resentments by degrees would have subsided. The Colonies, it is granted, were averse to the tax, remonstrated against it, and went greater lengths in opposition to it, than were consistent with duty and allegiance to that parent, by whom they had been nurtured, from their earliest infancy, with unremitting care and generosity. But by whom were they encouraged to acts of resistance, against the Legislature of this country? Indisputably by interested men here, by merchants and traders, who having large demands on America, feared, or pretended to fear, that if the act was enforced, their property would be endangered; and by statesmen out of place, who were happy to seize the opportunity, of rendering the Minister unpopular, as a likely method to effect a change in Administration, and thus
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make way for their own appointment to office. The plan succeeded. A change took place, and the Marquis of Rockingham was fixed at the head of a new Ministry, composed of men, who professed to disapprove this act of their predecessors.

The Stamp Act was repealed, but by no means with unanimity; for many foresaw from the concession, every evil which has ensued. The people in trade however approved the repeal. Many were frantic with joy, and the mob, ever ready to neglect their business, to drink, and to huzza, (no matter on what account) paraded the streets of London in triumph, and directed the houses to be illuminated on the auspicious event.

But though the exceptionable Act was thus disposed of, some of its effects still remained. The people at home were satisfied, and thought of nothing farther than receiving from the Americans, without delay, those debts, which they had before
imagined

imagined to be in danger. The Colonies, on the other hand, not viewing those transactions in the true light, nor acquainted with the secret springs which produced them, were not affected by the concession in the manner they ought. They attributed the repeal of the Act, solely to the justice of their remonstrances against it, and allowing nothing for the sordid motives of private interest and party spirit, (which were the real principals in the business) fancied themselves of such importance, that their applications to the mother country could in no case be ever resisted. Elate with this idea, it is more than probable, some leading men amongst them, immediately formed the plan of Independence; and with the view to justify such a step, determined to oppose the Legislature of this country, in all its acts of taxation respecting them, and to complain from that moment of the tyranny, injustice, and oppression of the parent state.

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Under the influence of such dispositions, it could not be long before occasions would offer for the exercise of their unreasonable and unfriendly resolutions. Men inclined to quarrel, are seldom delicate respecting the cause. Any thing serves the purpose. In short, the Americans resisted every act of taxation, and to refusal, added wanton and unnecessary insult and injury.

Government at home thus affronted, as was natural, grew angry. Marks of displeasure was discovered by us towards the Colonies. They experienced some proofs of resentment, and were taught to expect others, still more severe.

In this situation the Colonies sent over memorials, and presented petitions, acknowledging some acts of indiscretion, on the part of unknown offenders among the common people, but exculpating the superior orders from all share in the outrage; and maintaining at the same time,
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an exemption from the authority of Parliament, with regard to pecuniary exactions; and urging their claims to self government, in this instance at least, with much strength and firmness, amidst very warm expressions of apparent humility, duty, and affection.

How far their professions of loyalty and attachment towards this country were sincere, became a subject of question among those, whose province it was, to investigate their charters, and to ascertain from thence, the legal extent of their claims. To say the truth, there was the appearance of duplicity in their conduct; they were suspected of insincerity in the proposals they offered; and while absolute exemption from the jurisdiction of Parliament, in matters of supply, was made the indispensable condition of their allegiance in other instances, it was thought expedient to put an end to all treaty, and wholly to reject their petitions.

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Whether this measure was wise and prudent is difficult, if not impossible, to determine. It has been thought by some, that the Americans, at the season here referred to, would have been satisfied with the single concession then asked, and that being granted, the war would have been avoided. Others are of a different opinion, and arguing from experience in similar cases, contend, that their demands would have risen and multiplied, in proportion to our spirit of acquiescence; and that they would have added petition to petition, till they had met a refusal; and that no instances of moderation, generosity, or forbearance on our part, could have prevented the hostilities which followed.

This point must ever remain a matter of opinion and conjecture. Speculative men may argue and differ about it. The leaders in America are the only persons, who can solve the difficulty, or tell us, what concessions would have really satisfied them, or whether they meant to be satisfied with any.

any. But their testimony is not to be relied on in this case. They are too political to take any blame on themselves, and very artfully insist on it, that our rejection of their petitions, produced the war, and all its consequences.

Admitting this allegation of the Americans and their friends to be true, it will not follow, that Ministers were culpable in the part they acted, for guilt depends on intention. *Quo animo*, say the Lawyers. They wished to do right, and consulted in their conduct, as it appeared to them, the honour and interest, both of the crown and their fellow subjects. Those who knew most of America, of the people and country, their dispositions, and its resources, advised coercion, on the first acts of disobedience. If those who gave this counsel were mistaken, they erred innocently, and the fault is to be attributed to human infirmity alone; to that ignorance of future events, and inacquaintance with the real purposes of the heart, which ever attend us in the

present state. *Humanum est errare et nescire.* The complexion of things at the time we are called upon to act, must principally guide our determinations, and therefore to estimate the merits of measures, by the evidence of facts, which did not exist when they were resolved on, as it is weak and unphilosophical, so it is unjust and uncandid.

Under the circumstances as above described, of mutual disgust and animosity, all treaty was at an end. Neither party would concede. With equal portions of resentment, both countries prepared for hostilities, and the ill-fated hour approached, when the *immedicabile vulnus* was to be given. Administration however, with a degree of forbearance which will ever do them honour, with dispassionate men, appeared unwilling to proceed to extremities, and commenced their military operations with the utmost wisdom and moderation. General Gage, besides the merits of his public character, was known to have family connections

nections in America, and was supposed to possess much influence with the people. To him was committed the chief command, on the first outset of the war, and it was hoped and expected very naturally, that by his personal interest, he would be able to effectuate a reconciliation with the Colonies, without having recourse to arms. There was certainly much merit in this arrangement. But the wishes of Government were not gratified, and the expectations of the public were disappointed. General Gage's endeavours were unhappily ineffectual; and Opposition, instead of giving Ministers credit, for the wisdom of the plan they had formed, in this beginning of the contest, censured every part of it, and unjustly condemned them for their want of success.

To General Gage succeeded General Howe. By the appointment of this officer, Ministers gave the most unequivocal proof of liberality of sentiment, and impartiality

of conduct. Above the narrow prejudices of little minds, they consigned the chief command in America, to an officer who was known to be connected with Opposition; they chose him on the presumption of his professional merit alone, independent of all other considerations. People were sanguine in their expectations, of a happy conclusion to the war, from the acknowledged abilities of General Howe, and their hopes, were during a long time more particularly raised and supported, as the naval command was given to Lord Howe; and thus it was supposed, effectual measures were taken, to prevent misunderstanding in the different departments of military service, for want of which attention, on former occasions, many important expeditions had miscarried. The brothers were invested with very extraordinary powers, and possessed every requisite, with which Administration could furnish them, for the prosecution either of peace or war. They could negotiate or fight, as circumstances encouraged. But they finished
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their campaigns, without finishing the war; and returned home, laden, not with the spoils of the enemy, but with the emoluments of office. Opposition, as usual, reproached Ministers for disappointments they could not prevent, and charged Cabinet Counsellors at home, with the mistakes and neglects, (if there were any) of Admirals and Generals abroad.

On the return of Sir William Howe to England, the supreme military command naturally devolved on Sir Henry Clinton, an officer of tried abilities and established character; and he is seconded by Earl Cornwallis, a nobleman of most consummate talents; in whom are united all the endowments necessary for his station, courage and conduct, enterprising activity and deliberate perseverance; and who after fighting like Cæsar, is possessed of the happy art, of writing like him too. By the joint and well concerted plans of these great commanders, assisted in the execution by the spirited efforts of a chosen band of most meritorious officers,

officers, and their gallant followers, extraordinary exertions have been made, and as eminent proofs of skill and bravery have been given by our army in America, as were ever exhibited in any cause, since war became a science, and methods of destruction were improved by rules of art. But yet after all, the war is still unfinished ; America is yet in rebellion ; and we have not been able to reduce her to submission and obedience. Ministers confess their disappointment with concern and regret. But they are not criminal. Be the consequences of the contest what they may, they stand excused in the eye of reason, justice, and policy ; and can only be condemned by those who are determined to sacrifice every principle of truth, honor, and candor, to personal resentment and private interest ; and to censure without distinction every measure, which is not dictated or executed, by themselves and their own party.

That the American war has been the source of the most substantial evils to this country,

country, the members of Administration acknowledge as freely as the members of Opposition, but they and their friends deny the possibility of avoiding it, and contend for absolute acquittal of all demerit on the occasion. Thirteen provinces disclaim allegiance to the Crown, deny the authority of the Legislature, declare themselves independent, and enter into alliance with the avowed enemies of their mother country. Were Ministers, the guardians of the public interests, to acquiesce under such provocation, and tamely accede to their demands? Every principle of honour and justice, of regard for the dignity of the crown, or the rights of the people, forbid such baseness. But they never entertained so abject an idea, so derogatory to themselves and their fellow subjects. They resisted the **unjust** claims, and supported, with **becoming** spirit, the supremacy of the **parent state**, over all her dependencies.

But be it supposed for a moment, Ministers had acted **otherwise**, had consented to
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the demands of the Colonies, and recognized without a struggle their independence. What torrents of eloquence had been poured out against them in return for such treachery and treason. Opposition would have given them no quarter, and the guilt of surrendering the public rights, would have been displayed by the whole band of patriots, with all the aggravations, which malicious ingenuity could suggest.

If therefore Ministers would have justly been exposed to universal censure, had they acceded to the original requisitions of the Americans, how base and unworthy is it, to load them with invective for refusing them ! Their case is peculiarly hard, who are sure to be involved in one general sentence. A condemnation, whether they act or forbear, whether they resist or comply.

The malecontents however are not barely displeased with the conduct of Ministers, in their rejection of the American demands, but
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they affect to disapprove likewise every measure, which has been adopted by them, in order to reduce the Colonies to their primitive subordination.

Ministers have been deceived and mistaken, say their opponents, in their ideas, respecting the strength, spirit, and resources of America; and therefore no wonder their plans have been ill formed here, and defeated there. Taking this for granted, Ministers are only unfortunate, but not necessarily criminal. The difficulty of procuring intelligence, to be depended on in such a case, is infinitely greater than can be imagined; and if every practicable scheme has been pursued, to obtain the best, men are accountable no farther. The deceiver is the guilty party, the deceived is only to be pitied, not reproached. And when Generals in America, in the very scene and centre of action, tell us, that they are unable to acquire information, on which they dare rely, is it strange, if Ministers at home labour under equal inconveniencies?

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But the efforts of Administration, at the beginning of the contest with America, it is asserted, were too weak, and the force employed at first, altogether inadequate to the purpose proposed. Government admits the allegation, and assumes much merit in consequence. It was not designed to crush the Colonies, but only to chastise them; and it was hoped, that finding us in earnest, they would have renounced every illegal pretension, and returned to constitutional dependance and subordination. Wisdom and temper concurred in projecting our earliest operations, and though they were not effectual or successful, they are not the less entitled to commendation.

It is urged besides, by gentlemen in Opposition, that in the same manner as we appeared too lukewarm, in our first exertions against the Americans, so we were too delicate, with regard to the French; we connived too long at the assistance they gave to our rebellious subjects, and ought much earlier to have proceeded to hostilities against them.

them. That Ministers were apprized of the perfidious part the French were acting, with respect to us in America, and of the treaties negotiating between them and the Colonies, long before they chose publicly to avow it, cannot be denied ; but they considered themselves warranted by prudence and policy in avoiding, while they could, the multiplication of enemies ; and rather than precipitate the nation into a war with a powerful people, if it could be escaped, they restrained their resentment ; wishing, and indeed expecting, that some happy expedient might be found, to conciliate the Americans, to detach them from their new allies, and to prevent a rupture with the French. And who but a modern patriot would censure such discretion and forbearance ? But modern patriots are inconsistent characters, and their conduct is directed by no steady principle of reason, expedience, or analogy. Is this charge doubted ? Proof positive, full in point, presents itself. Scarce has the patriotic orator finished his invective against the Minister, for his pusillanimity,

in conniving so long at the treachery of the French and Spaniards; scarce has he closed his laboured harangue, on the tameness of administration, in forbearing to punish the violaters of treaties, and the abettors of rebels, when letters of marque are issued against the Dutch. Instantly the tide of eloquence pursues a different channel, and the Minister is held up to public execration, as the author of his country's ruin, by involving it in a war, which might perhaps have been avoided by treaty and negotiation, as madly increasing the number of our enemies, and wantonly exposing us to all the evils, which can possibly accrue, from the worst series of misfortunes which a fertile imagination is able to describe. In a word, the Minister in this particular is arraigned, for displaying those very talents, with the want of which he is charged, in his conduct respecting the French. Here his impetuosity is reprobated, as much as his moderation there; his quick resentment of national injuries, is represented in

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one article, as equally criminal with his prudent forbearance of violent measures in another; and he is maligned and traduced with unceasing acrimony, only because he cannot effect impossibilities, sustain contradictory characters in the same instance, and in every case be both active and passive.

Another subject of calumny with the enemies of Administration, is our want of allies. Great Britain, at war, say they, and no seconds to assist her! Astonishing and unpardonable! All parties confess the deficiency, and lament it, but Ministers merit no opprobrium on this account. If the great states of Europe, will be indifferent spectators of the injuries we receive, who can prevent it? If they will calmly sit still, while the balance of power is attempted to be destroyed, they must take the consequences. If unmindful of their obligations to us, they neglect to pursue any measures in our behalf, they prove themselves to be ungrateful, but not that we are unworthy. How much soever we
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may suffer for want of their assistance, no imputations can lay against our public conduct. Breach of faith, and unjust encroachment on the rights of others, form no parts of our national character; nor have foreign powers ever had less reason to be offended with us as a State, than during the administration of the present Ministers. If, therefore, they have not been able to secure allies, they have, however, done more, they have deserved them.

Besides the foregoing topics of declamation against Government, another source of complaint is derived, from our want of success at sea. Our fleets, it is alledged, meet the enemy; they fight, but nothing decisive results from the engagement: our ships are injured, but we neither take, nor lose a vessel. All this may be true, without any reflection, either on the Governors of the State, or the Commanders in the Navy. The fact is, since the last war, the French are improved exceedingly in naval tactics, and are now perhaps equal to ourselves in that science.

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But though it is confessed, they have acquired much skill, it will not be allowed we have lost any. One would be almost inclined to suppose, from the murmurs we daily hear on this subject, that Magna Charta conveyed to us an exclusive right to all military and naval knowledge; and that we expected all the other maritime powers of the world, to rest contented with that portion of skill which they possessed a century ago, while we alone are authorized to make continual advances, till we arrive at perfection. But what weak and partial reasoning is this! What poor philosophers, what sorry politicians, are such complainers! Do not letters, arts, and arms, prevail and flourish, in different degrees, in various periods, in the same country? And does not the history of the world, and even of modern times, furnish us with examples of astonishing national improvements, with respect to all the great articles of literary, political, civil, and military concern? Though we have not been able since the
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commencement of the present war to boast of such brilliant victories at sea, as heretofore, our Naval Commanders are yet as skilful as ever, are as brave as ever; and it is as unjust to degrade them in the public opinion, because a rival power has made advances in maritime knowledge, as it would be unfounded to assert, that a spirit of religious bigotry and persecution, prevailed among the Ecclesiastics in Protestant countries, only because, we have lately been witnesses to very remarkable proofs of liberality and toleration in the dominions of some Catholic Princes.

But Ministers are not only upbraided, because our fleets obtain no victories, they are censured likewise, because we have met with losses. Our trade has sometimes suffered, and a West-India island has been taken from us. If our enemies are furnished by foreign spies, or domestic traitors, with intelligence respecting the sailing, destination, strength, and value of our fleets,

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no wonder they are captured. No human abilities can prevent such effects under such circumstances. But instead of expressing surprise that we have lost so much, the greater marvel is, that we have lost no more. If on some occasions we have been sufferers, on others we have been gainers; and it is truly astonishing, taking an accurate survey of the nature of the confederacy against us, that the account stands so nearly on the balance as it does. The general safety of our trade, and the security of our various, and widely dispersed dependencies, afford the strongest proofs that need be adduced, of the abilities and attention of our Governors.

The state of the funds, is another article of complaint among the low spirited and disaffected. *Three per Cents*, at fifty-five, exclaims Mr. Quidnunc; then we are undone, and Ministers have ruined us. But how should stocks rise, when such indefatigable pains are taken by so many to keep them low? Those among the members of

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Opposition,

Opposition, who have money, from the very principle of opposition, refuse to deposit a guinea in the public funds. Supporting credit, is supporting Ministry, and Ministry, at all events, they wish to subvert, in order to enjoy their power and emoluments. National bankruptcy is spoken of by these malecontents, as not barely possible, but even certain, and not very distant; and thus by exerting all their influence, to discourage circulation, by prevailing on some to sell, and others not to buy, they endeavour to hasten that catastrophe, which they predict. Their endeavours however will be ineffectual. While additions (the unavoidable consequence of the war) are every year making to the public debt, stocks cannot be expected to become better; but on the establishment of peace, they will infallibly advance, and acquire and maintain a value, in proportion to their security; which must be considered as sacred, as long as any property is esteemed so in the kingdom, or the blessings of government are continued to us. During
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the late war, notwithstanding the popularity of Mr. Pitt, and though the debt was less by more than fifty millions, than it is at present, the three *per Cents* were within five *per Cent.* as low as at this time. It is therefore rather wonderful, they should stand so high, all circumstances considered; and their value can only be accounted for, from the confidence, which the generality of the monied people justly place, in the wisdom and integrity of the noble Lord, who presides over and directs our finances.

It is remarked, moreover, with much spleen and ill-nature, that the expences of the war are enormous; and that the people are burdened with taxes, to defray them, beyond the example of former times, and almost beyond their abilities to bear. All this is granted by Ministers themselves, but there is no remedy. A war, circumstanced like the present, against such numerous and formidable enemies, carried on in so many different parts of the world, so distant from the seat of government, from the centre

of supply, and from each other, must demand uncommon supports. In no other period of our history, were such expences necessary. As the public debt is much increased since the last war, more annual interest is required, in consequence of that addition to the capital; and when it is recollected besides, that both the Americans and the Dutch are now enemies, who were before our friends, and that we stand single and unassisted, against the united naval force of almost all the world, who can wonder, that our general estimates should run so high, and exceed those of earlier date. The public burdens, it is allowed, are heavy; but let it be acknowledged, at the same time, to the praise of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that these burdens have been regulated and imposed, during his whole administration, with uncommon care, sagacity, and address. Productive taxes must be obtained, and in order to their becoming productive, such articles must be made liable to them, as are in ordinary use. But still, amidst this circumstance of state necessity,

cessity, every possible attention has been paid to the lower orders in society, and the burdens have been thrown, as much as could be, on the unnecessaries of life, (if the expression may be permitted) on the luxuries of the times, and on those members of the political body, who are best able to bear them.

In aggravation of the evil of enormous supplies, it is farther objected, that no œconomy is exercised in the expenditure of them. It is possible, nay it is probable, some corruptions may be found, in some of the departments of the State. Abuses are sometimes discovered, even in private arrangements. It cannot then be surprising, if they should be met with, where concerns are so numerous, various, and complicated. Yet after all, it is not at any rate to be conceived, that frauds or neglects exist in the degree, which Opposition would insinuate; and it is well known a Board of Inquiry has been lately instituted, under the auspices of Government itself, for the sole purpose

purpose of detecting and preventing abuses, with respect to public monies; and from the joint labours of the Commissioners employed, much benefit has already accrued, and still farther advantages may be expected. But even concluding the misconduct of any individuals to be as represented, yet surely the present is not the time, for minute investigation or exemplary punishment. The ship of State is now in the most critical and perilous situation, amidst a variety of dangers, which threaten her destruction. It should be the first endeavor, of every real friend to the invaluable interests which are embarked on board, to get the vessel into port. When her deliverance is effected, and she rides in perfect safety, then is the proper season, to examine into the demerits of the crew; and if demerits appear, let punishments follow.

The increased influence of the Crown, furnishes farther matter for *invective* against the servants of it. They must meet this charge, for they can neither deny nor evade it.

it. Whatever degree of influence the Crown possesses, it is all strictly constitutional ; nor can it be diminished, without violating its legal prerogatives. The increase of this influence arises out of the war, and is inseparable from it. If the army is increased, the patronage of the Crown increases in proportion, and influence will ever attend patronage. But there is nothing new, corrupt, or illegal in this ; for it is as much the prerogative of the King, to appoint the officers in the last raised regiment, as in that of the oldest establishment. But why object to the influence of the Crown ? The charge, if any, should be, not that the Crown has more or less influence now than heretofore, but that it perverts that portion which it has acquired, to improper purposes, and applies it to the injury of the people. But such a charge cannot be maintained. The experience of every individual in the kingdom contradicts it. In no epocha of our history, was property more secure, justice better administered, and liberty, whether civil or religious, more fully enjoyed, by
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all descriptions of people, than since the accession of his present Majesty.

But not contented with vilifying Ministers, on account of their general public conduct, a certain set of men take upon them, to misrepresent them as peculiarly unworthy with respect to their private characters; as abandoned in their morals, as deficient in point of abilities, desperate in their fortunes, and in consequence, rapacious of emolument, beyond all former example. Far be it from me, to justify, or even palliate the vices of any, however exalted their rank, or eminent their station; but without attempting either, I may surely be allowed to observe, that before such a charge is made, the accusers should be thoroughly satisfied of the purity of their own party, lest it should be retorted on them, in the words of the satyrist,

“ *Clodius accusat Mæchos, Catilina Cethegum.*”

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It must be confessed, it is difficult to ascertain with precision, either the absolute or comparative merits, with relation to morals, of the contending parties; and it is indeed to be feared, that individuals may be found on both sides, whose manners are not quite so correct as might be wished. But it is asserted notwithstanding, and can be proved, that to state it at the lowest, and after making every concession, which impartiality may require, the sum total of private virtue, among the members of Administration, is equal to that among the leaders of Opposition; and to the credit of the First Lord of the Treasury in particular, it must be acknowledged, that in the relations of son, husband, father, brother, friend, or master, I will not say a more unexceptionable character barely is not to be produced, but a more meritorious one cannot be found.

But Ministers are not men of abilities, and Lord North is often caught napping. Indeed! *Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus;*

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and it is fortunate for patriotic orators, he does so. Amidst all his flumbers, he is equal to the best of them, and what havoc would he make with their declamations, was he more watchful! Nor are his colleagues less eminent, in point of general knowledge, or professional skill, than himself. There are men among them, who would have shone, in any age or nation of the world; and though the acknowledged talents of some few in Opposition, are truly respectable, yet it can never be made appear, that the enemies of Administration, are in any instances more accomplished, than the members of it.

Nor in the article of fortune, has the Minority any advantage over the Majority. It is allowed, there may be among the discontented, a few who are opulent; and from their opulence proceeds their influence, the florid harangues, the laboured Philippics in one place, the public meetings, the signatures to petitions, in another. But Ministers and their friends have at least equal reason

reason of this sort for attachment to the interests of their country; they have hereditary honours, paternal estates, and family connections, as securities for their integrity, and pledges for zeal and assiduity in the common cause. They have as valuable possessions at stake, and as much to lose, as those from whom they differ in politics. No argument can therefore be drawn, to the prejudice of Ministers, from a comparative estimate of their property, with that of Opposition.

Equally unfounded is every charge, relative to the rapacious spirit, or monopolizing principles, of the present Administration. Ministers in all times and places, have universally been allowed, to provide for themselves, their connections, and dependants. And why should they not? *Cæteris paribus*, who can have so good a claim? Those who discharge the duties of government, have the best pretensions to the rewards of it; and they must be weaker than idiots, who would furnish foes with wea-

pons, for their own destruction. But with whom originates the accusation in view? Not surely with Whigs, and the retainers of Whig administrations, the friends of Walpole, Pelham, Yorke, and Fox! Shame, where is thy blush! Look into the red book and see what ample provision former Ministers have made, for their families and dependants. And though time, which spares nor this party nor that, has indeed made many changes, and vacated many very valuable posts, yet even still some of the most lucrative offices in the appointment of the Crown, are held by men in Opposition to it; and amongst the most vehement declaimers against Government are those, who are in great measure indebted to its favour, for their importance.

And in yet farther refutation, of the objection, as urged above (if farther refutation can be required) let it be recorded, to the particular honour of the present Prime Minister, with what strict impartiality in the ecclesiastical line, he recommends to the
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Royal regards. Those who were witnesses to the mode, in which the late Duke of Newcastle exercised this branch of his power, cannot but recollect, with what illiberal prejudice, he shut the door to church preferment, against the university of Oxford, confining almost all the first honours in that department, to Cambridge men alone. How greatly superior is Lord North's principle of rewarding merit wherever he finds it, independent of this local attachment; and raising indiscriminately to dignity and emolument, the most distinguished characters of the clerical order, whether of one university, or of the other.

The foregoing, are some of the principal charges, daily alledged against Ministers. These accusations are first exhibited in parliament, then abridged in newspapers, and retailed in coffee-houses, and repeated in every company, whether public or private, where a patriot can gain admittance. Other objections, it is confessed, are occasionally introduced; and as circumstances require,
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the accusations are enlarged or contracted; aggravated at one time, by additional matter, and reduced at another, by the suppression of whatever may be thought inapplicable or unnecessary; for it is but justice to Opposition to allow, that the members of it have been unwearied in their exertions, and are neither deficient in ingenuity nor perseverance.

It would indeed be an almost endless task, to pursue these gentlemen, through all the efforts of their malevolence, against the present Administration; and as ineffectual as tedious, since those who are not convinced, of their general unfairness of principle and conduct, from those various examples which have been pointed out and exposed, would scarce be influenced by any instances which could be produced.

Here then I finish my review, of the spirit and labours of the contending parties; here close my vindication of Ministers; and turn, with becoming disgust, from the maxims and manners of their opponents.

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But before I take leave of my reader, let me be permitted to express my concern, that such a spirit, as that which we have been contemplating, should prevail, either among our senators or people. Amidst such a variety of measures, as come under the consideration of parliament, it would be absurd to expect perfect unanimity, as to the fitness and expedience of all of them. Different men must see with different eyes. But honest men, who really wish well to their country, and have no other interests at heart, will not endeavour, on account of disagreement in opinion, to vilify those with whom they disagree, to inflame the minds of the public against them, or lessen the weight and influence of the rulers with the people. When such is the conduct of a party, there is every reason to conclude, they are governed only by sinister motives; and that their opposition to those in power, arises solely from envy and jealousy, from covetousness and ambition; from a desire to render them so uneasy in their places, that they

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may be induced to resign, and thus make way for their establishment in them. It is not candor but weakness, it is not charity but folly, to acquit men of ill designs, when their behaviour is uniformly of ill tendency; when all their proceedings lead to anarchy and confusion, to make their fellow subjects licentious and refractory, dissatisfied with their Governors, and dispirited with respect to the public welfare. What an advantage is given to the enemies of a community, when any considerable proportion of it's members, study how they may most effectually embarrass Government, distract Ministers, and divide the people. How much better founded is his claim to genuine patriotism, who though not approving every measure of the majority, quietly acquiesces; modestly supposing, that he may sometimes be mistaken as well as others; and candidly allowing, that even those who think differently from him, may possibly in all points have as much merit as himself.

But while I thus bear testimony, against the depravity of their hearts, who as it were
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systematically endeavour, to distress and defeat the Ministers of Government, in the discharge of their duties, let me pity the weakness of their heads, who are deceived and misled by such baseness ; and who are so far deluded as to believe, that a change of Administration would instantly remove all the evils they deplore. View the leaders of Opposition. Have they not occupied within these few years, all the first offices of honour, power, and emolument, in the State ? And what were their great achievements for the public welfare, while they held them. They must be the heralds of their own merits, for they are no where upon record. And suppose them re-admitted into the same appointments again, what singular advantages could be reasonably expected to result from their Administration ? What are their plans for the public good. It is well known they have none. These great reformers are divided among themselves, as much in sentiment, as affection and interest. Scarce any three concur in the same political

cal ideas. The only point in which they seem to agree, with any tolerable uniformity of opinion and design, is the ruin of their country, the demolition of the constitution, the fairest fabrick that was ever erected upon this earth, which the wisdom of ages has been improving, and which the whole assemblage of human virtues has thus far united to preserve.

And may it be perpetual! May it survive the malevolent attempts of all its enemies. And could we but be persuaded, to join hearts and hands among ourselves, there would be no room to admit any fears respecting its safety or permanence. Were the people of this country zealous in behalf of the constitution, in proportion to the value of the blessings they enjoy under it, and unanimous in their exertions for its defence, no gloomy apprehensions, with regard to public danger, need in any case be entertained. Our resources are still extensive and powerful, sufficient to enable us to vindicate

cate our just rights, to defeat the injurious designs of our adversaries, and to obtain in consequence, in due time, an honourable and lasting peace.

P O S T C R I P T.

SINCE the foregoing pages were sent to the press, the disaster which has befallen our forces in Virginia, has been announced to the public. Our progress in that quarter, is thus very unhappily checked; and it would be weak, as well as wicked, to treat the misfortune as of little moment. It would besides be ingratitude in the extreme, if we estimated lightly the sufferings of those gallant men, who amidst innumerable difficulties, have been long making the most animated exertions in our behalf, and are now at last, in consequence of their perseverance in our cause, experiencing the hardships of captivity. But still, though
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all this is granted, (though we are bound to sympathize with our much loved countrymen in their distress, and cannot but lament the loss of their farther services) there does not, as yet, appear any ground for criminal charge or accusation.

The province of Ministers extends no farther, than the appointment of officers to command, in the several branches of military service; to sketch out plans for their operations; and to furnish the means for their completion. The execution is with the commanders, and whatever be the result, Administration stands exculpated. The brave Cornwallis can deserve no censure, can lose no honour; whether in triumph or in captivity, he has equal claim to our admiration and our praise. When his dispatches arrive, the most dissatisfied murmurers will be convinced, he did all that could be effected, in his circumstances, to prevent the misfortune in which he is involved. And with respect to Sir Henry Clinton, we are in possession of no evidence to his disadvantage,

tage, he is yet unheard ; his schemes, designs, and attempts, are much unknown to us ; and till we are furnished with his detail of them, the equitable and sagacious maxim of our law, which presumes every man innocent, till indisputable testimony proves him guilty, clearly directs us, either to suspend our opinions altogether, or to suppose him faultless.

And little must they be versed in the history of the world, and the events of war, which form a very principal part of it, who do not know, that military arrangements, of all others, are more particularly liable to disappointment ; frequently miscarry, from circumstances totally unexpected ; and which no human powers could either foresee, or prevent ; and that there never yet has appeared a commander, who, however victorious, triumphant, and successful in general, did not meet with his temporary checks, and partial defeats.

Instead then of enveighing against Government at home, or criminating, without

out full proof, their instruments abroad, let us persuade ourselves, that every thing has been well designed, by all parties concerned: and instead of sinking, dispirited and inactive, under the loss we have sustained, rouse and unite, in vigorous exertions, to repair it. In proportion to the injuries we have received, and the dangers with which we are threatened, should be our endeavours, to redress the one, and escape the other, and we should each of us, burn with zeal, to recover every advantage, of which the fortune of war has deprived us. We possess means adequate to the purpose, if we were but unanimous in the direction of them; and notwithstanding the numbers and force of our foreign enemies, they are the machinations only of domestic foes, which can fully produce our ruin.

And in the present very important crisis of national affairs, while Ministers are more than enough employed, in devising methods, to combat with success, the avow-

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ed adversaries of our country, and want the full use of all their faculties and resources, to enable them to conduct with wisdom and effect in their several departments, how peculiarly ungenerous is it in any, to increase their embarrassments, by groundless suspicions, ill-founded charges, and perverse opposition. Those who thus act, may be polite scholars, may be eloquent speakers, may be accomplished gentlemen; but they are not good citizens: in short, they may be entitled to any fame, to which their ambition soars, except only that, which is alone due, to the real disinterested friends of their country.

To this great reward, this honest fame, let every man aspire, in his particular station; and let him prove his pretensions to it, by supporting Government; confiding in the wisdom and integrity of his rulers; cheerfully submitting to such a share in the general burdens, as public exigencies

gencies require; and animating all, as far as his influence extends, to the vigorous prosecution of every measure, for the common good, which legal authority may commend and enforce.

T H E E N D.

